

From: Mark Levin
Sent: Sat 8/8/2015 6:22:54 PM
Subject: Mark Levin's comment on the Denver Post Article RE: Gold King

Many of the comments on the Gold King news stories are trying to make this into some kind of polarized issue, variously blaming Republicans, capitalism or greedy mining companies, but clearly that is not the case.

The Gold King was mined long before any environmental requirements were in existence, and our developing nation, as a whole, benefited from the metals produced and sold into a competitive market without including the price for environmental protection to our modern standards and values.

Colorado already has among the strictest standards in the world for permitting new mining operations, which includes bonding for the full cost of reclamation.

It seems so easy to say: "Let's not allow mining".

It is important to remember that everyone depends on large quantities of mined products every day, whether they realize it or not.

If we don't mine here in the US, with strong environmental and safety laws and high wages, those products will have to come from somewhere else, often with lower standards and to the benefit of despotic governments who skim a lot of the economic benefit from the mine production to feather the nest of their cronies and political party in the capital city, instead of investing in sovereign wealth funds for long term development to create sustaining benefit the local population by the mine.

Enjoying the products of mining and not being willing to produce them locally, strikes me as NIMBY hypocrisy, not true environmentalism.

The Western US has numerous other inactive mines with the potential to have a similar blowout, that also need attention. Funding for this effort has to be seen as only one of many competing priorities for our economy to carry, regardless of how the money is collected.

The taxpayers alone will never be able to carry the burden of cleaning up all the inactive mines, and the mining companies who operated most of those are long defunct.

We need to look for betterment, not perfection, if this problem is to be solved in any reasonable time frame.

Re-mining of old districts, which could also fund cleanup, is blocked by fragmented property ownership, unlimited potential liability for existing conditions, and standards which essentially require "perfect" cleanup to be performed, or water discharge to be maintained, by any private entity seeking to explore for, or produce minerals at a historic

site, while the regulators often give themselves a "pass" on the water quality standards when they step in do the remedial work on inactive sites. This duality of approach does not make sense. Whether resources are allocated from tax expenditures or corporate funds, they all come out of the wealth of the nation at the final accounting.

Where there are potentially viable mineral deposits left, a reasonable policy approach to incentivize private sector cleanup and re-mining of those deposits, might be to enable a mechanism to force the consolidation of the fragmented mineral estates, into logical size units (with a fair royalty to the owners), and providing some flexibility in standards, while requiring remedial actions which achieve some significant, but economically attainable, level of environmental improvement and/or risk reduction over the existing conditions in a particular watershed.

BTW-

The photo galley associated with this article appears to include images of the Red and Bonita mine, which is a different site than the Gold King.

Colorado already has a mineral impact severance tax which was supposed to be used only to help offset mineral development impacts. Most of the money is handed out by DOLA to fund pork projects which have absolutely nothing to do with real mineral development impacts.

(....not much different than the federal Social Security Trust Fund, Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act funds, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and similar honey pots that are diverted each year by Congress, instead of being used for the purposes intended)

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